



PRESS RELEASE

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USAID Launches \$60 Million Program to Save Lives of Mothers and Children

U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan June 9 -- The Honorable Ferozuddin Feroz, Afghanistan's Minister of Public Health, joined William Hammink, Mission Director for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan, at the launch of a new five-year USAID program to reduce Afghanistan's high rate of death among mothers, infants and children under age five.

Ministry officials, representatives of U.N. agencies and organizations dedicated to implementing health-care solutions participated in the event. USAID is investing \$60 million in the HEMAYAT: Helping Mothers and Children Thrive project. It will work with the Ministry of Public Health, the private sector and civil society to promote proven, cost-effective, life-saving health practices for vulnerable populations in the most rural and hard-to-reach communities in 21 provinces in Afghanistan.

"Ensuring that these high-quality interventions are available and that Afghan mothers and children are positively motivated to access them will reduce deaths that we know are preventable," said Hammink. "More women will survive pregnancy and childbirth and more babies will survive and thrive, go to school, and grow to be leaders in their communities and for the nation."

USAID's investment builds on the successful U.S.-Afghan partnership. USAID has supported the Ministry of Public Health to provide the basic package of health services and essential package of hospital services to the Afghan population. The new investment supports the aims of the Ministry of Public Health's May 2015 'Call to Action: Renewing the Promise for Maternal and Child Survival.'

Minister Feroz reiterated Afghanistan's commitment to reducing maternal mortality rate to 255 deaths per 100,000 live births, the newborn mortality rate to 26 deaths per 1,000 live births, and the child mortality rate to 65 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2020.

"The launch of the HEMAYAT project is important for us because it supports maternal and child programs both at the policy level and field level," said Minister Feroz. "It generates the demand for health care services and simultaneously supports the Ministry and the implementers to provide the quality services. It focuses on family planning and thus builds upon the past experiences and programs. It focuses on child health care with more emphasis on newborn care. So it is very important."

USAID HEMAYAT Project

The USAID HEMAYAT project is increasing access to, utilization of and demand for high-quality family planning, maternal, neonatal and child health services provided by the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health's Basic Package of Health Services, and also services offered by the private sector. The project advances proven, evidence-based life-saving health practices such as the use of antibiotics, cord care, drugs that prevent and treat postpartum hemorrhage, resuscitation, immediate and exclusive breastfeeding, and birth spacing.

For more information about USAID's programs and interview requests, please contact: telephone +930700116744, KabulAIDdoc@usaid.gov, <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov>

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."



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